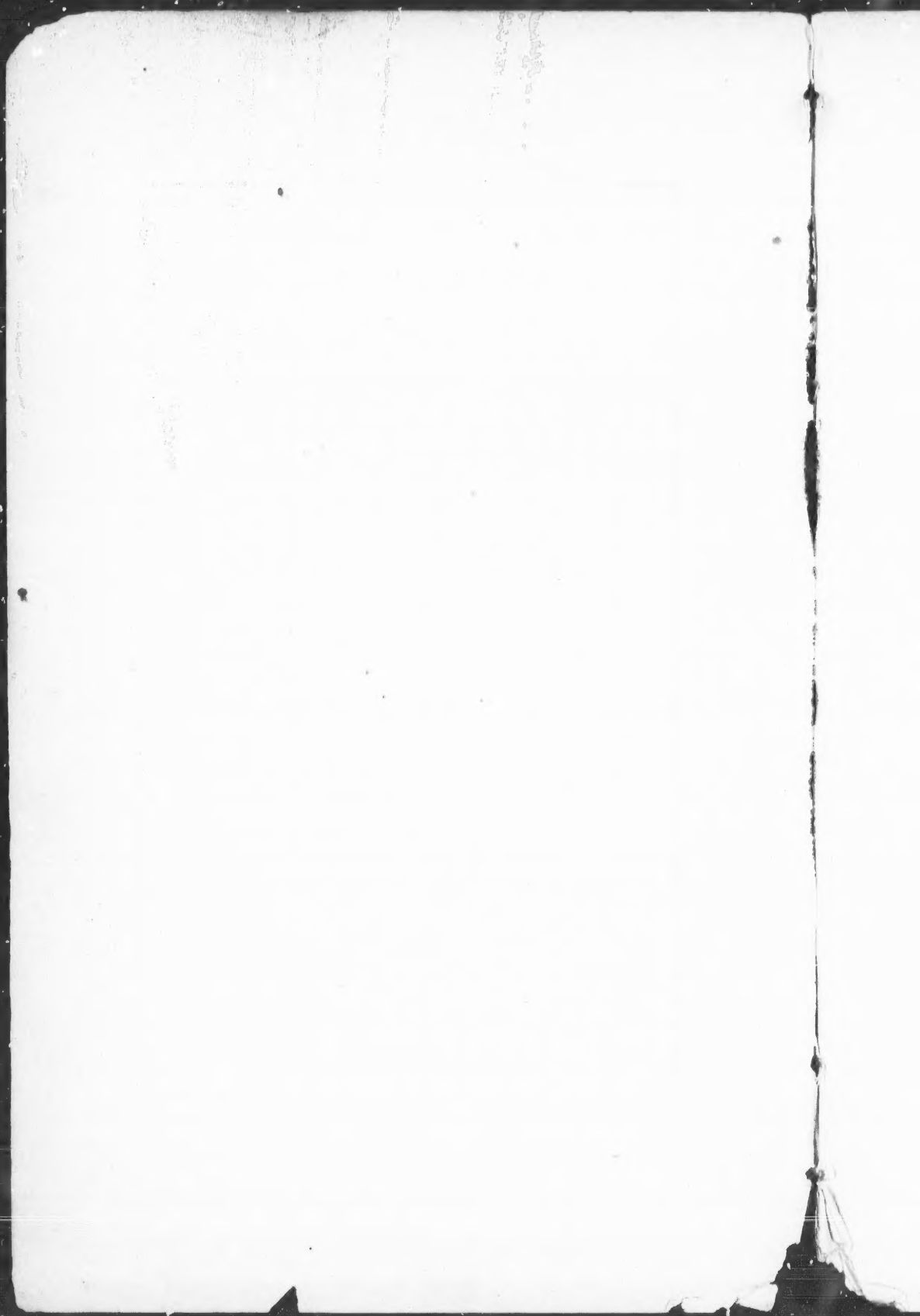


b4

EXTRACT
FROM
A S E R M O N
Preached in St. Andrew's Church,
TORONTO,
On the 30th April, 1865.
BY
THE REV. DR. BARCLAY,
ON THE OCCASION OF
THE SUDDEN DEATH
OF
COLONEL E. W. THOMSON,
ONE OF THE ELDERS OF THE CONGREGATION.

MONTREAL :
PRINTED BY JOHN LOVELL, ST. NICHOLAS STREET.
1865.



1892

EXTRACT FROM A SERMON

Preached in St. Andrew's Church, Toronto, on
the occasion of the sudden death of Colonel
E. W. Thomson.

"But man dieth and wasteth away. Yea, man giveth
up the ghost, and where is he?"—*Job* xiv. 10.

Death is ever busy in the prosecution of his melancholy mission among the sons of men. With unrelenting perseverance, and sometimes with startling rapidity, does he repeat, in successive demonstrations of the frailty of man, the one sad story of mortality—opening afresh the fountain of human sorrows—illustrating anew the transitoriness of human life—and carrying one after another of our neighbours, our acquaintances, and our friends away for ever from the living intercourse we had with them.

Within the circle of this congregation death has once more come, an unwelcome intruder. A man of mark among us, an Elder of the Church, has been stricken down. In the twinkling of an eye—without the usual warning

notes of the heralds which announce the approach of the King of Terrors—unwasted by sickness—engaged in the ordinary avocations of life, he has passed away from us with such startling suddenness that we pause and wonder whether the sad story of his decease be indeed a reality! Last Lord's day found him as usual in his accustomed seat in the sanctuary—a worshipper along with us, and apparently in his wonted health. Ere another Sabbath dawned, his mortal part had been laid in "the narrow house," and his spirit had returned to God who gave it.

It seems fitting that here, where our departed friend has united with us for so many years in the worship of Almighty God, we should give expression to the feelings that move our hearts, and to the sympathies that press for utterance, over the severance of those earthly ties that bound not a few of us to him, as a friend whom we had long known and highly respected. It is not my purpose—nor will it be expected of me, here to enter largely into the details of the events of his life. It is enough that in general terms, and in a few sentences, I should simply remind you of the salient points of his character, that for a few brief moments you may contemplate what he was as a man,

highly respected among all who knew him—what as a member of society, for whose interests he had done not a little in his day—and what also as a Christian, humble and earnest, whose walk and conversation so fully accorded with his profession as a member of the household of faith: that while we thus pay due honour to his memory, and drop the tear of sympathy on his tomb, we may also learn the lessons that are taught us alike by his life and by his death.

The pulpit is no place for unmeasured eulogy. But I do not think that I use other than the sober language of truth when I speak of our departed friend as one who was upright in his principles and honourable in all his intercourse with his fellowmen. Of active habits, and unwearied diligence; with an open manliness of deportment, which gave its tone to all his actions, and with a soundness of judgment which enabled him usually to arrive at right conclusions, for his own guidance, and to give valuable advice to others; steady in his aims and strenuous in his efforts, to maintain the ascendancy of truth and right, with a kindness of disposition which led him to take a warm interest in the welfare of those around him, and, whilst decided in his own opinions, prompted him to pay a becoming deference to

the views of others : he had thus many excellent qualities both of head and of heart to commend him to the approbation of the good, and he had secured a high place in the estimation of a large circle of friends as a valuable member of society and an upright estimable man.

Living, as he did, at a period in the history of this Province, when men of public spirit and of private worth were specially needed to aid in the development of the resources of a young country, he, in various ways, did important service, in his day, to the cause of the material and the social progress of this the land of his birth. His country, to which he was truly loyal, he had served in the field. In early life he was one of the gallant band of volunteer defenders of its soil—whose ranks are now greatly thinned by death—who in a time of need maintained a successful resistance to a foreign foe, sustained with undaunted bravery the honour of their country's flag, and preserved the integrity of the Empire, of which it is our pride and happiness still to form a part.

His subsequent life presented instances not a few of unselfish devotion to the public interest : and he was well and widely known as a man of enlarged views and generous sympathies, who took his part with the foremost men of his

time in seeking to promote the general prosperity of their common country.

Particularly is his name honourably associated with successful efforts to improve the agricultural operations, in which so large a portion of our population are directly interested; and, in that important department, to advance the general interests of the Province. The qualifications which fitted him for taking part in such work, justly demand our respectful recognition.

But there was something far more important than even these public and patriotic efforts—qualities and aims of sufficient prominence in his career to claim even a fuller and heartier tribute to his worth—especially from this place. His religious character was decided. Cherishing a becoming reverence for religion, he ever manifested a due regard for sacred things: Animated with an humble faith in the divine Saviour, he paid proper respect to the day of the Lord, and the ordinances of the church of Christ—whilst with exemplary regularity he attended public worship here notwithstanding his distance from this House of Prayer. Possessing an eminently catholic spirit, yet his attachment to the church of his fathers, as an honoured branch of the great Christian family,

was sincere and enlightened. The efforts he so willingly made to aid in promoting the prosperity and extension of the Branch of the Parent church in this land, were highly to be commended. And he was ever ready to take his part in the advocacy of the claims of the various missionary and other schemes of the Church. His services as an Elder, both in the more local duties of his office, and as a representative of the session in the higher Ecclesiastical Courts of the Church, in which, in his turn, he sat as a member, are worthy of special mention. For the same clearness of apprehension, soundness of judgment, and honesty of purpose and good practical common sense, which formed a prominent characteristic of his mind, had there opportunity to manifest themselves in the opinion he formed, and the sentiments he expressed on the various important questions that came up for consideration in the Church Courts. Over all these qualities, which thus distinguished the deceased, there was spread that strong sense of religion which gave colour and complexion to his whole career. But to say this is but to affirm that he endeavoured to put religion to its proper use in making it not so much a matter of public profession (altho' *that* it also was with him) as a

pervading principle by which he sought to regulate his life. Hence his religious character was not of that demonstrative kind which appeals to the public eye and seeks to attract the notice of others—as a thing superadded to other accomplishments. It was rather of that eminently practical sort which quietly and unostentatiously influenced his course of conduct, and enabled him to give to it's claims the response of an upright, exemplary, Christian life. He had been the subject of early religious impressions, which grew with his growth and strengthened with his strength into the confirmed habit of a life regulated by the precepts and hopes of the gospel. In early life he made a narrow escape from a watery grave. On one occasion when travelling with him, long after, in that quarter, he himself pointed out to me the place where he was made the sole survivor of a numerous company who were overtaken by a storm on Lake Ontario, when the vessel was wrecked and all his companions were drowned—he alone succeeding, with much difficulty, in reaching the shore. He was then preserved, in the good Providence of God, for a life of activity and usefulness to his fellowmen, and that he might present the life of a humble Christian example in the sphere in which he

moved. That example he endeavoured faithfully and unostentatiously to maintain. And though his departure was so sudden and unexpected, and death overtook him in circumstances which deprived him of the presence of those whose kind offices of affection would have been ministered to him in the closing scenes of life; and although the stroke of death came so suddenly as to deny him the opportunity even to arise and trim his lamp, yet the cry "behold the bridgeroom cometh" surely took not such a man by surprise, but found him ready—firm in the faith wherein he had stood so long, and in the blessed hope of glorious immortality! We reverently bow to this dispensation of God's providence which has thus deprived us, as a congregation, of the further presence and counsel of an honoured member and a valued office bearer—we cherish his memory now that he is hidden from our eyes amid the dark shadows of the tomb—we offer our respectful and heartfelt sympathy to sorrowing relatives who lament his unexpected departure. We hear the solemn truth as it comes in distant echoes from the grave where the righteous rest in peace, that decay and death, which thus have their triumph over all that is earthly in the condition and the hopes of man,

cannot dim the brightness of the spiritual and the heavenly, but only succeed in giving to these elements of our regenerated nature a brighter and more enduring lustre,—and that godly example is the most precious legacy to friends and kindred, with the hallowed remembrances that hang around the life that was regulated by the “hope that maketh not ashamed.” And surely a solemn admonition is lifted among us this day that “there is but a step between us and death.” It may overtake you in youth when the journey of life had scarcely been more than begun. It may meet you in the mid-time of your days, when but half your course seemed to be run—or its dark shadows may not envelop you until you have descended into the vale of years. But whether in the second or in the third watch the cry ariseth—“Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him.” “The night is far spent—the day is at hand.” “Let your loins be girded and your lamps burning,” and ye yourselves like unto men who wait the coming of their Lord.

